

## Message in a Bottle Travels 800 Miles to Resident's Brother

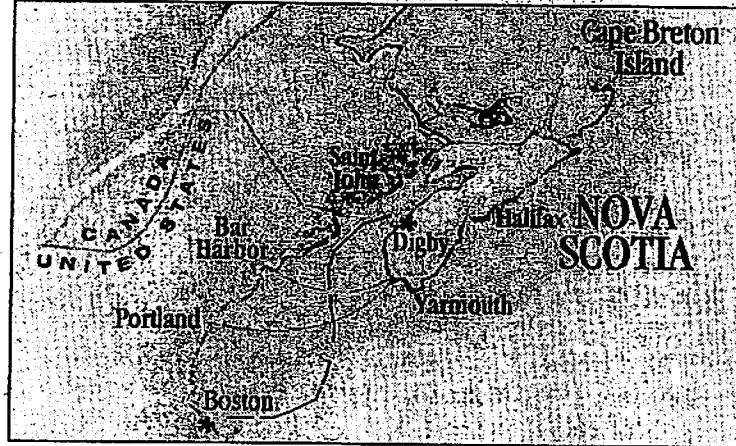
By PAULA MAXWELL

The fact that 12-year old Robbie Woodruff's message in a bottle was found about 800 miles from Duxbury off the coast of Nova Scotia is unusual enough, but to learn that the man who retrieved it has a sister in his hometown is simply astonishing.

Robbie, a seventh grader from Quail Run, said he was "shocked" when he received the call in September from Quincy Collins, a Baptist pastor from Digby, Nova Scotia.

"He told me he found my bottle near his house and that he had a sister in Duxbury, Massachusetts," said Robbie. "I didn't know what to say."

Robbie said he threw the Gatorade plastic bottle into the



Robbie Woodruff's message in a bottle travelled from Duxbury to Digby, Nova Scotia between June 16 and early September.

bay in June when he and his parents set out on their boat, *Snow Goose*, to go whale watching in between the Gurnet and Stellwagen Bank.

Inside the bottle, was a slip of paper with his name, ad-

dress, age, and telephone number and the date he dropped it in the ocean, June 16, 2001.

He said he had read last year in *Time* magazine of how some

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schoolchildren in France found a bottle on the beach which came from someone in America.

"But I didn't really think anybody would really find mine," he said

Robbie's mother, Betsy, said she didn't even know her son dropped the bottle in the water so when the call came she and her husband, Jay, were even more amazed.

"I called his sister, Mairi, in September after he called to tell us so we could find out more about her brother and to talk about the amazing connection," she said.

Mairi Fuller of Alden Street has been Director of Development for Camp Wing for the past three years after moving to Duxbury



Pastor Quincy Collins and his wife, Bonnie, found Robbie's message in a bottle while walking along the Little River section of Digby, Nova Scotia in early September.

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Twelve year old Robbie Woodruff launched his message in a bottle in June.

from Toronto.

She, too, was astounded to learn her 47-year old brother found Robbie's bottle. Her brother e-mailed her the news.

"We are two of nine children who grew up in Nova Scotia. I called my mother in Avonport to tell her about it too," she said.

Contacted at his home in Digby Monday, Collins described how he came upon the bottle around the first week of September.

"My wife, Bonnie, and I, walk on the beach each day. Digby is a small fishing village on a spit of land separating the Bay of Fundy and St. Mary's Bay. We walk on the north side to Little River and sometimes stop by the stone bridge there.

"On this day, I noticed a bottle stuck in the stone wall about four feet up. The high tide

things up for recycling and I noticed a note inside. I recognized Duxbury as the town where Mairi lived," he said.

He soon called Robbie to tell him how and where he found the bottle

and that he would write to him.

Betsy Woodruff said her son has taken up a new interest in learning about tidal currents and has mapped the route his bottle took from Duxbury to Nova Scotia.

"He's kind of shy and hasn't even told his teachers at Duxbury Middle School yet. His two older brothers are away at school. I think some of

his friends might know about it," she said.

While the *Clipper* was talk-

Robbie and Betsy came in to the office with a photo. They had a chance to speak to Rev. Collins and made plans to keep in touch and send him the *Clipper* story.

Though 'the message in a bottle' hasn't made the local news or Rev. Collins'

weekly sermon in Digby, yet, he said it is just a matter of time.

Robbie said he remembers he was disappointed at first that he didn't see any whales that June day he dropped the bottle off the side of his boat, into the ocean.

In hindsight, someday he's

sure to realize that this experience tops any fantastic fish story he'll ever hear.